Relations with Iran

1894. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the impact of Hyde Act on India's relations with Iran;

(b) whether our close ties with US influences India's relations with Iran; and

(c) whether Government think that Iran's program is for peaceful nuclear development?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) There is no impact on foreign policy. PM had assured Parliament in his statement in the Rajya Sabha on 17 August, 2006 that "Our foreign policy is determined solely by our national interests. No legislation enacted in a foreign country can take away from us that sovereign right. Thus, there is no question of India being bound by a law passed by a foreign legislature. Our sole-guiding principle in regard to our foreign policy, whether it is on Iran or any other country, will be, dictated entirely by our national interest."

(b) No.

(c) Iran maintains that its nuclear programme is exclusively for peaceful purposes. Reports of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) continue to state that the Agency is unable to fully reconstruct the history of Iran's nuclear programme and provide full assurances of its exclusively peaceful nature or about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran.

Highway along Mount Everest

1895. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Chinese authorities are making a highway along Mount Everest whereas the Himalayas are already burdened with several 'man-made threats';

(b) whether this new blow by Chinese of robbing Himalayas with a highway would pose a lot of danger and threat to global environment as well as pose threat to India's security;

(c) if so, whether the Chinese authorities have been apprised of India's concern;

(d) if so, the Chinese response thereto; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) (a) to (e) Government have seen media reports stating that China plans to construct a highway on Mount Everest located on the border between Nepal and Tibet Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China so as to facilitate the carriage of the Olympic torch to various places in the People's Republic of China